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# PSCI 210S.01: Introduction to American Government

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# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT SYLLABUS

PSCI 210 Section 01 / Fall 2013  
T/Th 12:40 p.m. - 2 p.m. in SS #352

Professor: Jeffrey Greene

Office: LA 356 / Telephone: 243-6181 / E-mail: jeffrey.greene@umontana.edu  
Office Hours: 2-2:30 (T, Th) and 3 - 4 p.m. (M)

**Text:** *American Government: The Essentials*, 13/e by Wilson & Dilulio

Students can use any edition of Wilson & Dilulio including *The Essentials* or full editions from the 9/e through the 13/e. Please note that some of the chapters are in a different order in the earlier editions. Also, the full edition contains a number of additional chapters on public policies.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

**PSCI 210** is intended to introduce students to the fundamentals of **American National Government**. The course includes an examination of basic American political principles and practices, the Constitution, major institutions, and civil liberties. The objective of this course is to acquaint students with the complexities of the American political system.

## Grade Weights

Test 1 .....50% October 24 (Thursday) *The exam covers Chapters 1-11*  
Test 2 ..... 50% December 3 (Tuesday) *The exam covers Chapters 12-17*  
Test 3 (Optional).....**TBA** (*Test #3 covers Chapters 1-17*) You are NOT required to take this exam but you must sign up for the exam on December 5.

The **University of Montana** now uses a version of the **Plus/minus** grading system and a **Credit/No Credit** system (the CR/NCR replaces the Pass/Fail system used in the past). *General education courses must be taken using the traditional letter grade to count toward one's general education requirements.*

To accommodate the Plus/Minus system a new grading scale will be used. In **PSCI 210** grades will be assigned based on the following grading scale. This scale and system is more complex than the system used in the past but rewards As only to those students whose performance in the class is "exceptional."

Grade	Point Scale	Point Range	GPA
A	93-100	8 points	4.00
A-	90-92	3 points	3.67
B+	87-89	3 points	3.33
B	83-86	4 points	3.00
B-	80-82	3 points	2.67
C+	77-79	3 points	2.33
C	73-76	4 points	2.00
C-	70-72	3 points	1.67
D+	67-69	3 points	1.33
D	63-66	4 points	1.00
D-	60-62	3 points	.667
F	59 or lower	N/A	0.00

**EXAMS:** All exams will be objective tests (true/false and multiple choice). Students should bring a standard Scantron form (the exact form is Form **F-289**, which is available in the UC bookstore). The length of Exam #1 and Exam #2 vary from 50 to 100 questions.

**Test 3** is **OPTIONAL**, based on your satisfaction with your grade after Test 2. Test 1 and Test 2 **are not** comprehensive; **Test 3 will be comprehensive (that is, include specific material from the entire semester)**. If you select to take **Test 3**, each test is weighted as *one-third*. The final exam typically consists of 200 questions. It should be noted that very few people ever take Exam #3.

**MAKE-UP EXAM POLICY:** All students are expected to take the exams at the times specified above. Make-up exams will be given in the event of extenuating circumstances. Students must make prior arrangements by calling either the Political Science Department office (**243- 5202**) or my office (**243- 6181**) and leaving a message. You can also send a message by e-mail to [jeffrey.greene@umontana.edu](mailto:jeffrey.greene@umontana.edu)  
**Make-up exams will not be the same tests given during the scheduled time.**

### Exam Rules and Expectations

All students are on the "honor system" while taking exams. The tests are "closed book" exams. That is, you cannot use notes. If caught using notes, your grade on the exam will be **zero** and therefore you will fail the course. Book bags and other items should be zipped closed. Everyone is expected to be quiet (no talking or noise) while taking exams. Exams given in class use **Scantron Form F-289**.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** There is not an attendance policy for this class. Students are expected to attend most classes. There is a direct correlation between attendance and grades.

### Holidays at UM during the Fall Semester

September 2 (Labor Day)

November 11 (Veteran's Day)

November 27, 28, and 29 (Thanksgiving Break) *No class on November 28*

**TEACHING ASSISTANT:** This section of PSCI 210 does not have a teaching assistant.

**POLITICAL SCIENCE WEB SITE:** <http://www.cas.umt.edu/polsci>

### ONLINE VERSION OF THE SYLLABUS:

There is an online version of the syllabus posted on Moodle und PSCI 210-01.

### COURSE OUTLINE and READINGS

#### Part I -- The Basics of the American Political System

This section examines the fundamentals and basic concepts of the American political system, such as the Constitution, federalism, political culture, public opinion, political parties, and interest groups. (Part II examines the core institutions, such as Congress, the presidency, the courts, and the bureaucracy). Test 1 only includes the material covered in Part I; Test 2 only includes the material covered in Part II plus the chapter on the media.

Please note that specific dates are not provided on a class-by-class basis because some areas take several classes to cover while other subjects take only a single class.

**Introduction: What is Politics? Citizenship and Our Changing Society** (Tuesday, August 27)

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapter 1

**The Founding Period, The Constitution and the Foundation of Citizen's Rights**

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapter 2 + ***The Constitution & Federalist #10*** (included in the back of the textbook)

**Federalism**

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapter 3

**Civil Liberties and Civil Rights**

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapters 5 and 6

**Political Culture and Public Opinion**

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapters 4 and 7

**Political Participation**

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapter 8

**Political Parties, Campaigns, and Elections**

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapter 9 and 10

**Interest Groups**

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapter 11

**TEST #1 Thursday, October 24** (The exam covers 11 chapters)

**The Media**

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapter 12

**Part II -- The Institutions of American Government and Public Policy**

The chapters covered during the second half of the semester are about the major institutions of American government (Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, etc.).

**Congress**

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapter 13

**The Presidency**

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapter 14

## **The Bureaucracy**

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapter 15

## **The Judiciary**

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapter 16

## **Public Policy**

Wilson and Dilulio: Chapter 17

**TEST #2 Tuesday, December 3** *(The exam covers Chapters 12-17). Exams will be returned on Thursday, December 5. Students need to determine if they want to take Exam 3 and must notify the instructor on December 5.*

**TEST #3 TBA** *(Test #3 covers Chapters 1-17). Normally, students make arrangements to take Exam 3 since it is an optional exam. It should also be noted that few students take Test #3.*

**(TEST #3 will be COMPREHENSIVE and is OPTIONAL! Students are not required to take the exam)**

**STUDY GUIDES and PowerPoint slide shows are located on Moodle**

Study guides are located on **Moodle** for this class. All PowerPoint presentations and many other materials are also posted on **Moodle** under PSCI 210-01.

## **Textbook Website**

Cengage provides numerous resources on the Internet, including practice exams, outlines, chapter summaries, learning objectives, etc. The link to the 13/e is <http://coursemate.cengage.com/CPReader/View/9781111956349/default.aspx?eISBN=9781111956349&anon=True#home> This book can be purchased as an e-book from Cengage. The online version of the syllabus (located on Moodle has live links, including this link).

*PSCI 210 / Section 01 / Fall 2013*